offered by the State Governments of all coastal states including Orissa. After recommendation by the Site Selection Committee, the sites have to be approved by the Government and cleared by statutory agencies.

Nuclear power through private sector

104. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have sought reforms in nuclear power sector through private sector participation; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) A proposal to amend the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 to enable private sector participation in nuclear power generation in the country has been under consideration of the Government. However, no final decision has been taken.

Selling of Uranium to India

105. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Australia has agreed in principle to sell Uranium to India;

(b) if so, the details of the move;

(c) whether any request has been made to this extent by India to Australia;

(d) whether it is also true that Australia putting some conditions to sell Uranium to India;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether the conditions affect India's prospects of getting Uranium?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Government has no information about any decision, in principle, by Australia to sell Uranium to India.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government of India is exploring the possibility of international cooperation in civil nuclear energy with all potential countries.

(d) to (f) Do not arise.

Handling over of coal mining

106. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA:
SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to handover coal mining to the private sector; and

(b) if so, the total quantity of coal proposed to be set up apart for this purpose, and the number of private players, who have so far been given or are proposed to be given coal mines for mining purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) As per the provisions of the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 an Indian company, both in private and public sector, engaged in power generation, iron and steel manufacturing and such other end-uses as may be notified by the Central Government from time to time, can do mining of coal. Cement production was notified as end-use for coal mining on 15.03.1996. Thus companies in private sector have already been allowed captive mining of coal for the above mentioned end uses.

The Government has already allocated 55 coal blocks with geological reserves of about 7.43 billion tonnes for captive mining to various companies in private sector. 20 coal blocks and 8 lignite blocks with reserves of about 2.6 billion tonnes of coal and 0.741 billion tonnes of lignite respectively were offered through advertisement in 2005 for allocation through capitive mining route. 81 coal blocks having total geological reserves of about 20.02 billion tonnes have further been identified for allocation to Government/ private sector for permissible end-uses. Out of these 39 coal blocks with about 6 billion tonnes of reserves have been recently advertised and applications invited for allocation to companies for specified end uses.